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STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AFR/SP
NAIROBI FOR SFO
NSC FOR PMARCHAM, MMAGAN, AND TSHORTLEY
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
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TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: DARFUR - UN AGENCIES PLAY VITAL ROLE IN HUMANITARIAN
EFFORTS

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SUMMARY

[¶1.](#) (U) UN agencies are crucial to the provision and coordination of humanitarian assistance in Darfur. The UN agencies provide important leadership, through coordinating a wide variety of assistance activities, acting as a liaison between the humanitarian community and the Sudanese government, and directing provision of common humanitarian services. Continued support for UN agencies is vital to maintaining the large humanitarian effort underway in Darfur. End Summary.

BACKGROUND

[¶2.](#) (U) The USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) supports six UN agencies in Darfur: the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Program (WFP), the UN World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). In Fiscal Year 2006, USAID/OFDA funding for the six UN agencies totaled USD 27.5 million.

[¶3.](#) (U) This cable provides an overview of the UN's important role in Darfur.

COORDINATING SERVICES AND LIAISING WITH THE GNU

[¶4.](#) (U) Overall coordination of humanitarian assistance is led by OCHA, both in Khartoum and in the three Darfur states, with weekly coordination meetings for UN agencies, as well as international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs). OCHA also plays an important role in liaising with the Sudanese government on behalf of the humanitarian community. Other UN agencies, such as UNICEF, WHO, and FAO coordinate sector-level activities in health, nutrition, food security, and water, sanitation, and hygiene.

[¶5.](#) (U) The UN agencies also work closely with the Government of National Unity (GNU) ministries, building capacity and assisting with tracking NGO service provision. During the summer of 2006,

UNICEF and WHO led agencies in planning for the prevention and treatment of reported cholera cases in Darfur. The two agencies coordinated efforts undertaken by a myriad of international NGOs, as well as the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the GNU's water and sanitation authority.

COMMON SERVICES AND TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP

¶16. (U) Relief commodities for Darfur are provided through a common pipeline, which is a joint effort of UNICEF, CARE, and the UN Joint Logistics Center (UNJLC). UNICEF procures the commodities, including plastic sheeting, blankets, sleeping mats, water containers, and women's clothing. CARE transports the commodities to distribution sites across Darfur, and UNJLC coordinates and documents the process. The common pipeline enables NGOs to order and receive the relief commodities free of charge in the needed locations, either as initial assistance to newly displaced populations or to provide for particularly vulnerable households in camps and to replace hygiene supplies.

¶17. (U) WFP operates the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS). UNHAS flies between Khartoum and the three Darfur states and has helicopters that transfer passengers from the three state capitals to operational areas that are inaccessible by road due to insecurity. As insecurity has reduced access throughout Darfur since May 2006, helicopters are the only means for humanitarian workers to reach populations throughout Darfur. With funding from bilateral donors, including USAID and the Common Humanitarian Fund, UNHAS now operates two helicopters in each of the three Darfur states, enabling twice weekly flights to many destinations and providing evacuation capability for aid workers in remote areas. Passengers are charged for flights, but the operation is subsidized by donor funding. UNHAS charges passengers USD 40 per person for intra-Darfur flights and USD 100 for Khartoum to Darfur flights. Commercial airlines operate Khartoum to Darfur flights for USD 120,

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and have intra-Darfur connections to all three Darfur states.

¶18. (U) UNICEF, WHO, and FAO provide technical leadership in their respective sectors: health, child protection, agriculture and food security, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene. Recently, WHO has improved the Early Warning and Response System's (EWARS) reporting capacity throughout Darfur. Previously, EWARS relied on reporting from international NGOs, and when NGOs could not access certain areas reporting ceased from those locations. To remedy this, WHO identified and trained local health officers to provide weekly reporting. As of the last EWARS bulletin, 88 percent of locations reported. WHO provided training to local health officers, as well as medical kits, diagnostic kits, and communications equipment, including satellite phones and scratch cards, to enable the officers to conduct tests and report results. WHO expects the true test of the new reporting system to occur with the early detection of malaria and acute watery diarrhea during the upcoming rainy season. EWARS has already performed well in the early detection of meningitis cases, which requires daily reporting.

COMMENTS

¶19. (U) USAID needs to encourage the UN to implement a cluster approach in Darfur. Currently, the protection sector lead is the UN Mission in Sudan Protection Unit (UNMIS/Protection) that operates under the leadership of the UNMIS Darfur Coordinator. This structure hampers the sector's effectiveness as the Darfur Coordinator plays a political and representational role for the UN in Darfur.

¶10. (U) Currently, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is planning to engage in IDP camp coordination activities in Darfur. However, UNHCR has no memorandum of understanding with the GNU and is operational only in West Darfur. If the UN decides to employ a cluster approach in Darfur, close

coordination between the International Organization for Migration, OCHA, and UNHCR will be needed to ensure effective IDP camp management and circumvent GNU administrative impediments.

POWERS